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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DAR ES SALAAM 000732

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E

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SUBJECT: CCM Party Counts Down to Nomination Day

Classified by Pol-Econ Chief Judy Buelow for reason 1.4(b)

REF: A) Dar es Salaam 711, B) Dar es Salaam 538, C) Dar es Salaam 217, D) Dar es Salaam 57

1. (C) Summary: Top leaders in the government and the ruling CCM party are converging on the capital Dodoma for the events that will determine Tanzania's next President. Following the regular parliamentary session of April 12-22, the CCM Party Congress will convene to select the party's nominees for the October general elections. Because of the CCM's overwhelming dominance on the Tanzanian mainland, the CCM candidate for Union President and most of the CCM candidates for the national parliament are sure to prevail. During the run-up to the announcement of the CCM's nominees on May 4, the internal party campaigning will be intense, if mostly conducted out of public view. In the interim, we do not expect the Government of Tanzania to get much else done. Unfortunately, while the CCM is fully engaged in this intense, intra-party deal-making, top party leaders might be reluctant to rein in the CCM's Zanzibar contingent and prevent the Zanzibari government from undermining voter registration before it concludes April 22. End Summary.

2. (U) There is little doubt in anybody's mind that CCM nominee who will be announced on May 4 will become Tanzania's next President. Originally Tanzania's only legal political party, the CCM still commands formidable party machinery and dominates the Tanzanian mainland. The CCM is also likely to retain its overwhelming majority in the National Parliament, where it currently holds 256 out of 295 seats, after the October elections. A competitive electoral contest is expected only on semi-autonomous Zanzibar and in a handful of mostly urban districts on the mainland.

3. (U) For now, all of the action ? and the top government and party officials ? are shifting to the isolated capital city Dodoma. The April 12-22 session of Parliament is now underway, and will vote on legislation on matters ranging from rural electrification to the auditing of cooperatives. During this election year, however, the main event will begin the last week of April, when the top organs of the CCM select the party's nominees for electoral office.

4. (U) The party will tackle one of its hardest tasks first. On April 27, a special committee of the CCM's National Executive Committee (NEC) will meet on Zanzibar to choose the party's nominee for the Zanzibar President. (Please note: the CCM's ?NEC,? a party organ, is not to be confused with the National Electoral Commission, which is the government office that organizes and conducts national elections.) Incumbent President Karume is running for a second term, but to the surprise and consternation of some in the CCM, Dr. Mohammed Gharib Bilal has challenged him for the party nomination. Dr. Bilal represents the faction of former Zanzibar President Salmin Amour, who lost the party nomination to Karume five years ago. Opinions are mixed as to whether the Amour/Bilal faction has sufficient strength within the CCM to stage a comeback, but the deep split within the Zanzibar branch of the CCM can only weaken the ruling party as it prepares to face the opposition CUF in the October elections.

5. (U) The CCM's NEC will return to Dodoma for a planning session on April 29-30. The Central Committee convenes May 2 to scrutinize the CCM's eleven candidates for the Union Presidency, and will winnow their numbers down to five. On May 3, the NEC reconvenes to vote on the top three candidates. The big event is set for May 4, when the 1,800 member strong national party Congress, technically

the CCM party's highest organ, convenes to vote for the nominee. Since the regular party Congress convenes only once every five years, the party's day to day administration, and the real power, resides with the 200 members of the CCM's NEC, and especially with those NEC members who are also on the Central Committee. Most of the 36 members of the Central Committee also hold the top positions in the national government. Five of the CCM candidates for President are themselves Central Committee members.

16. (SBU) The real decisions will likely be made within the very top echelons of the CCM party: a small, tight circle of individuals who know each other very well, and who have been alternately forming alliances and betraying each other for years. Information about the decision-making and its outcome is under extremely close hold, although this doesn't stop everybody else in the political parties, in the press and in the diplomatic community from speculating wildly about the identity of the nominee who will be announced on May 4.

17. (SBU) Among the CCM's eleven declared candidates for President, Foreign Minister Jakaye Kikwete is generally considered the man to beat. Other front runners include the venerable CCM Party Vice Chairman John Malecela, representing the party's Old Guard, former OAU Secretary General Salim Salim, and possibly the embattled Prime Minister Frederick Sumaye, if he can overcome the suspicions that he is corrupt. The remaining seven candidates may hope to emerge as a compromise choice (following the pattern established in Mkapa's 1995 nomination). Some may be running to enhance their visibility within the party, to gratify their egos, or to position themselves for ministerial portfolios in next administration. Occasionally, the rumor mill has cited Vice President Mohammed Shein as a hot prospect, but Shein has not yet filed his candidacy; at this late date, he is probably out of the running. (For a complete readout on the candidates and their prospects, please see Reftel B.)

18. (C) For the next few weeks, at least, we expect the government to be somewhat distracted. Foreign Ministry officials admitted as much during a recent demarche; they reported that Foreign Minister Kikwete had turned much of the daily administration of foreign affairs over to his deputy.

19. (C) The diplomatic community is increasingly concerned that it will be difficult to focus high-level government attention on Zanzibar, where the CCM government faces a strong electoral challenge and where irregularities in voter registration have recently turned particularly ugly. Even if Zanzibar's embattled President Karume succeeds in obtaining the CCM party nomination, he stands a good chance of losing the presidency to the opposition CUF party in the general elections. Developments in recent weeks suggest that that the Isles contingent of CCM is running scared, and may not be inclined to allow free and fair elections on Zanzibar. From April 2-22, the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) is registering voters in the populous Urban West Region. Since April 2, however, evidence has been mounting that local government headmen, called *shehas*, have received instructions to illegally bar CUF supporters from registering. (Please see reftel A for a full update.) Reportedly, the *shehas* are taking their instructions from top officials in the Zanzibar Government, such as Chief Minister Nahodha, or President Karume himself. The diplomatic community plans to approach leaders in both the National and the Zanzibar governments to urge them to rein in the *shehas* and allow the ZEC to conduct credible registration.

19. (C) Comment: In general, major policy decisions and initiatives involving the Tanzanian government are best put on hold until after the CCM's nomination fever subsides on May 4, and after we have a clearer idea about who our long-term government interlocutors will be. The serious irregularities in the Zanzibar voter registration cannot wait, however. For better or worse, registration on Zanzibar will be completed April 22. The voters register, and ultimately the Zanzibar elections, will not be fair and credible, unless key leaders at the very top levels of the CCM party insist that the ZEC be allowed to register voters in accordance with legally established procedures. We believe that President Mkapa wants to leave a legacy of a peaceful, democratic transition, although he

may not particularly want to be remembered as the politician who ?lost? Zanzibar for the CCM. Mkapa?s dilemma may find echoes among other influential members of the Central Committee. We can assume that considerable horse-trading is occurring behind the scenes in the CCM, as the CCM?s presidential hopefuls vie for allies and support. We can only hope that the credibility of the Zanzibari election is not one of the items to be traded away in the coming days. End Comment.

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